

Planning Board – Town of Spencer

Minutes

Planning Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 21, 2012 at 7:00 PM

McCourt Social Hall

Memorial Town Hall



The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

Planning Board Members Present: Chair Shirley Shiver, Mary Stolarczyk, Ralph DiChiara, Robert Ceppi

Planning Board Members Absent: James Whalen and Associate Member Jonathan Viner.

Staff present: Brynn Johnson, ODIS Clerk

Staff absent: Michelle Buck, Town Planner

Ms. Shiver opens the meeting.

New Business:

1. Reorganization of the Board: The Board decides to wait until next meeting when all members are present.

2. Bixby Trail Estates, Discussion of Potential Project Modifications.

Mr. Patrick Gallant is the owner of the property but will be selling the property. Ms. Joan Honig a Consultant for the prospective new owner of Bixby Trail Estates explains the property was previously approved by the Board in January, 2007 to build a 42 unit development, in which all the units would have 3 bedrooms. She is now asking that the number of bedrooms be reduced. She is proposing the development have 21 units with 3 bedrooms, and 21 units with 2 bedrooms. Three units will be fully handicap accessible. As of now nothing else from the original plan would be changed. The reduction in bedrooms from 3 to 2 will make the development more desirable and affordable for people that only need 2 bedrooms.

Mr. Shiver asks if the units will still have single car garages. Ms. Honig says yes as of now they feel the plan is a good plan and don't want to change much.

Mr. Ceppi asks if there will be affordable housing in this development. Ms. Honig says yes.

The Board members feel this project is a good idea and have no problem with reducing the number of bedrooms in half the units.

Mr. Shiver recommends Ms. Honig talk to Michelle Buck, Town Planner to see what the proper procedure is for amending the original plan.

Ms. Honig says she will call Ms. Buck to work out the details. She asks the Board if the paper work can be changed to say twenty one (21) two (2) bedroom units or does it have to go in front of the Board again for a vote. Ms. Shiver recommends she talk to Ms. Buck to make sure proper procedures are followed.

3. ANR Plan, Mass Audubon, Greenville Street

Mr. Wyman explains that Mass Audubon on behalf of DCR is purchasing a parcel of land from James Sielis as part of the creation of a corridor to connect the Sibley Farm conservation area to the Spencer State Forest.

Ms. Shiver asks the Board if they have any questions. There are none.

MOTION: Mr. Ceppi makes a motion to approve this plan. Ms. Stolarczyk seconds the motion.

VOTE: is 4-0 in favor. The Board signs the mylar copy.

4. Minor Site Plan Review: Parking Lot for Sibley Farm and Burncoat Pond Wildlife Sanctuary. Location: 131 Greenville Street. Charles Wyman and Ginny Scarlet are present to represent the project.

Mr. Wyman explains the plan Mass Audubon and the Greater Worcester Land Trust are proposing the construction of a parking lot at the site of the former Seven Springs House Farm at 131 Greenville Street. This parking lot will serve visitors to Sibley Farm and Burncoat Wildlife Sanctuary. The lot will accommodate 11 cars as well as a bus turn off. The bus drop off area is not expected to be used very often. There will be trails from the bus drop off and parking lot that will lead to an orientation/information area. From this area a trail will lead north into the Sibley Farm area and one will lead east to Burncoat Pond Wildlife sanctuary. A third will lead to the Mid State Trail. These trails will have compacted gravel transitioning to natural soil as you go further from the orientation area. The house and barn on the site will be demolished thus making a reduction in impervious surface area. They have already been issued the demo permits by the Building Dept. The only impervious surface will be the paved driveway apron which is required by the town. The parking area will be enclosed by a fence with a gate to allow maintenance vehicles onto the property when needed. This would also allow an area for overflow parking on the grass if needed for an event.

Mr. Ceppi asked if snowmobiles will be allowed on these trails. Mr. Wyman explains the snowmobile trail will stay where it is now, on the Northern end of the property. There is no snowmobiling allowed on the Mid State Trail.

Mr. DiChiara asked who will be responsible for snow removal. Mr. Wyman says Mass Audubon and The Greater Worcester Land Trust will be responsible for the snow removal.

Mr. Wyman says he will be at the next Conservation Commission meeting to address any stormwater concerns. They are looking into having a basin or a rain garden they will finalize this with Conservation.

Ms. Shiver expresses concern that this is a Minor Site Plan review not Major. After hearing Mr. Wyman talk about over flow parking, events and buses pulling up, abutters may have concerns. On the plan she understands the design but the impacts to the site are not clear such as erosion controls. Also there is no snow storage area on the plan and the plan doesn't show what will be demolished. Ms. Shiver feels this project should have been a Major Site Plan Review with abutters' notified.

Mr. Wyman says he didn't include the demolition on this plan because he already got that approved with conservation and the building department. The Conservation Commission and abutters were notified of the demolition.

Mr. Ceppi asks if there is a check list to see which category this plan falls under major or minor.

Ms. Shiver says yes there is a checklist and feels this project is right on the borderline of requirements making it go from a minor to major site plan review. She wants abutters to be aware of what is going on at this site and have a chance to ask questions.

Mr. Ceppi agrees abutters should be notified.

Ms. Scarlet tells the Board abutters should be already be aware of this project. This project has already been on the agenda for the Conservation Commission and abutters had to be notified as part of the requirements of the demolition permit.

Ms. Shiver asks if abutters got a notification in the mail regarding the Conservation Commission meeting. Ms. Scarlet says no, they didn't get a letter in the mail but there was a public notice in the news paper. And they were notified by mail for the demolition permits.

Ms. Shiver says she doesn't want to leave this to chance, and have upset abutters after the fact. She feels abutters should be notified by mail. There is going to be enough of an impact that abutters may have concerns such as demolition, limits of work, bus drop off, and events. These items should be known to the abutters.

Ms. Shiver asks if both the house and barn will be demolished. Mr. Wyman says yes.

Ms. Shiver says she will feel more comfortable with a public hearing.

Mr. Wyman expresses concern that continuing this to hold a public hearing may push them out of this construction season. Ms. Shiver tells him they will hold the public hearing next month and try to make a determination at that meeting so hopefully they will be able to start construction before the end of the season.

Ms. Shiver asks how emergency egress will be handled at the site. Mr. Wyman says this plan was sent to Police and Fire and to date they haven't responded with any issues. Ms. Shiver wants comments if any from Police and Fire to be shown on the plan.

Ms. Shiver says if at the next Conservation meeting this plan gets revised in any way she would like to see that on the new plan.

Mr. Wyman says they are presenting their stormwater management plan to the Conservation Commission tomorrow night and will be sure to revise the plan if needed.

Ms. Shiver says the Board would not feel comfortable making this decision tonight. There are multiple things going on that could impact the neighborhood. Not just demolition but construction, bus loads of kids pulling up for field trips and events. She thinks this is a wonderful project for the town but is nervous about getting a calls from abutters asking why they weren't notified of all this. Ms. Shiver says if this was clearly a minor site plan she would be all for it, but because there are so many concerns she wants to be sure abutters are aware.

Mr. Wyman asks if he should prepare for a major site plan review for the next meeting. The Board tells him no. It will still be a minor site plan review however they will have a public hearing with abutters notified.

This review will be continued to the next meeting on September 18, 2012. An advisement will be posted in the Spencer New Leader on August 31 and September 7 to notify residents of the public hearing. Also abutters to 131 Greenville Street will get a public hearing notification letter in the mail.

5. Candlewood Estates: Road Acceptance Request and Request for Reduction in Surety

Mr. Murkland explains they have addressed all comments from Spencer Utilities & Facilities and JH Engineering Group. The slit fence has been removed. The clearing/mowing of the detention basin has been mowed once this season and will be mowed again before the town meeting.

Mr. Murkland also asks for a reduction in security to 5,000. It is determined that this amount is sufficient for remaining work.

MOTION: Mr. Ceppi makes a motion to request the acceptance of the road and reduce the surety amount. The road acceptance will be subject to any further comments from Steven Taylor. Mr. DiChiara seconds the motion.

VOTE: (4-0) in favor.

NOTE: After the vote a woman from the Candlewood Estates neighborhood association requested a street light be installed on Greenville Street at the entrance to Candlewood Drive. They feel it's a public safety issue there for the town should pay for it. If the town will not install/pay for the light, they may ask that the neighborhood association be able to install/pay for the light. The money would come from the neighborhood association fees.

The Board tells them they will recommend a light but are unsure if the town will pay for it. The neighborhood association may want to call U & F to see what their feelings are.

6. Approval of Minutes: June 19, 2012 and July 25, 2012

Motion: Mr. DiChiara makes a motion to approve the minutes for June 19, 2012. Mr. Ceppi seconds the motion. Vote: is 4-0 in favor.

The Board will wait until next meeting when James Whalen is present to vote on the July 25, 2012 minutes.

Adjournment: With no further discussion the meeting is adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Submitted by: Brynn Johnson, Jr. Clerk

Approved by the Planning Board on: _____September 18, 2012_____

List of Documents used on July 25, 2012

Sent to Planning Board prior to Meeting:

- Agenda
- Memo to Planning Board from Michelle Buck, Town Planner dated 8/16/2012
- Minutes 7/25/2012 & 6/19/2012
- Sibley Parking Lot application and plans
- Sibley Parking lot comments from Steven Taylor, Spencer Utilities and Facilities dated 8/10/2012
- 80 Greenville ANR application and plan
- Candlewood road acceptance comments from Steven Taylor, Spencer Utilities and Facilities dates 7/31/2012
- Candlewood road acceptance comments from JH Engineering Group dated 8/13/2012
- Certificate of Decision for Bixby Trail Estates from January 15, 2007